

# THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## SUPERVISOR'S HANDBOOK



## THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential counseling and personal assistance program, provided under contract through Managed Health Network (MHN), by the State of California. EAP services are provided at **no charge** to State employees and eligible dependents.

Employees and eligible family members covered by the program are entitled to use our confidential counseling services for emotional health and personal problems.

### EAP SERVICES INCLUDE

- Clinical counseling by a licensed counselor
- Legal consultation
- Financial consultation
- Dependent care consultation
- Pre-retirement consultation
- Concierge personal services

The goal of EAP is to provide helpful resources to employees when personal problems arise.

The program is also an important tool for supervisors and managers. The guidelines contained in this handbook are designed to show you how you can use EAP to help solve employee problems, maintain productivity, and contribute to a positive workplace.

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\* To speak to a Management Consultant, call 866-EAP-4SOC (866-327-4762)

## THE EAP PROCESS

Whether self-referred or referred through a Formal Supervisor Referral, MHN will work with an employee or their eligible dependents to find an MHN counselor who best meets their individual needs. All MHN counselors who provide EAP services are fully licensed and specialize in providing short-term EAP counseling. These providers include psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, certified alcohol and drug counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists. MHN has a licensed clinician on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week to speak immediately with an employee should the need arise. EAP also provides employees with access to counselors for issues such as dependent care, financial and legal concerns.

EAP counseling is designed to help an employee **identify their problem**, work with their counselor to **explore possible options and resources**, and assist the employee in **developing an action plan** to follow in order to resolve the issue they are facing. Depending on the plan that is developed, the employee can continue with the EAP counselor for short-term therapy through their EAP benefit if appropriate, or the counselor can help the employee find the appropriate therapist for longer-term therapy. Whatever the case, the counselor will assist the employee in finding the proper type of treatment.

The employee will be able to choose if they want their clinical counseling sessions to be face-to-face in a counselor's office or, if it is more convenient, they may choose to speak with an EAP counselor over the telephone.

## SERVICES AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Everyone has problems from time to time. It's when those problems begin to manage the person instead of the person managing the problems that job performance can be affected.

As a manager or supervisor, you may find it difficult to help an employee when you suspect that their personal problems have impaired their job performance. EAP provides an alternative in some of these situations. In many instances, employees will contact EAP on their own. At other times, you may suggest that employees contact EAP. You can also formally refer an employee to EAP when their performance problems do not respond to standard supervisory interventions.

EAP offers free, confidential counseling to State of California employees and their eligible dependents that is designed to identify problems and refer the person to appropriate resources. Clinical counseling and Work-Life consultations cover many typical personal issues including:

- Relationship and family concerns
- Substance abuse
- Emotional issues
- Legal concerns
- Financial issues
- Dependent care concerns

The Management Consultants from MHN are also available to managers and supervisors at any time for:

- Management consultations
- Suggested self-referrals
- Formal Supervisor Referrals
- Post-trauma stress debriefings
- The impact of downsizing and restructuring
- Potential violence in the workplace
- Mental illness in the workplace
- Chemical dependency problems

## MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION

Management consultation is a valuable and confidential service to managers and supervisors who may have concerns regarding an employee's job performance or an employee's personal issues, which have come to their attention. They are encouraged to make telephone contact with MHN for professional and objective consultation. MHN consultants are available to talk over the situation and assist the caller in exploring various options. The consultant helps clarify issues, coaches the caller, and makes referrals to appropriate internal and external resources.

When a consultation is desired, you can call MHN and speak with a consultant. MHN's consultants will work with you to evaluate alternatives and decide whether an intervention is advisable. If a referral is appropriate, you decide, with an MHN consultant's help, whether a suggested self-referral or Formal Supervisor Referral is in order.

## SUGGESTED SELF-REFERRAL

If an employee requests help in dealing with a personal problem or concern, you can suggest he or she contact EAP. Employees who have an obvious problem that has not yet affected job performance can also be encouraged to contact EAP.

## FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL

One of a manager/supervisor's responsibilities is to monitor employee performance. If an employee's performance or conduct in the workplace is unsatisfactory, a Formal Supervisor Referral may be appropriate.

The Formal Supervisor Referral is a management tool used to improve work performance and resolve work-related problems. It is not intended as a disciplinary measure, nor does it replace the State's policies and procedures for dealing with poor performance or conduct.

Prior to presenting a Formal Supervisor Referral, the supervisor/manager must contact MHN's Management Consultant to discuss the employee's performance and open a case file. This will ensure specialized service when/if the employee accepts the referral and calls to access services.



If the employee accepts the referral, MHN's consultant will schedule an appointment with a counselor whose task is to conduct an assessment. The counselor will meet with the employee to analyze the work performance problem and any underlying personal issues. The counselor will work with the employee to develop a plan of action, and refer the employee to appropriate counseling or community resources.

This initial assessment (usually one or two visits) is not counted against an employee's allotted visits/sessions. The employee may use his or her self-referral EAP sessions for additional counseling.

## FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL PROCESS

The following steps outline the Formal Supervisor Referral process. Working through this process with an MHN Management Consultant will help ensure a successful interaction with your employee.

1. Document job performance, conduct issues, attendance, and other issues of concern.
2. Contact EAP and ask to speak with an MHN Management Consultant about the situation.
3. Prepare a Formal Referral Letter. A sample referral letter is provided later in this booklet.
4. Meet with the employee in a confidential setting and discuss the job performance, conduct, or other issues of concern. Outline your specific expectations and make the formal referral to EAP.
5. Note on the Formal Referral Letter whether the employee accepted or declined the referral.
6. Continue to document the employee's job performance, conduct, etc. If no progress is made, follow appropriate disciplinary procedures.

## TOOLS & RESOURCES FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

As a Manager or Supervisor, addressing work performance problems can be one of the most stressful aspects of your job. Although approaching an employee to address performance issues is never easy, your EAP provides support services to assist you through this process. This section of the Supervisor's Handbook is designed to help you identify potential performance issues, as well as provide guidelines to assist you in successfully completing a Formal Supervisor Referral.

The following pages will provide direction on:

- Utilizing the EAP Management Consultant for consultations on employee performance concerns, providing you with direction specific to the performance issue at hand.
- Identifying and recognizing common indicators and signs that may signal potential problems your employee may be experiencing which are impacting their job performance.

- Outlining the steps to begin a Formal Supervisor Referral, including examples of the necessary documentation needed (checklist for a Formal Supervisor Referral, Management/Supervisor Referral letter and Authorization for Release form).
- Useful strategies and techniques to objectively address job performance problems in a supportive and effective manner.

Utilizing the tools and resources on the following pages, when necessary, will help you in your role as an effective manager or supervisor.

## COMMON INDICATORS OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS

### ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE

- Excessive use of sick leave.
- Repeated absences from the work area, i.e., more than necessary.
- Consistent use of leave on Mondays, Fridays, and/or the day after payday.
- Repeated early departures.
- Peculiar and increasingly improbable excuses for absences.
- Repeated tardiness in the mornings or failure to return from lunch on time.

### PERFORMANCE

- Improbable excuses for poor work performance.
- Difficulty recalling instructions and details.
- Alternate periods of very high and very low productivity.
- Embezzlement or stealing at work.
- Missed deadlines.
- Impaired judgment and decision-making.
- Decline in the quality and/or quantity of work.
- Increased number of complaints about the employee.
- Lack of concentration or focus.
- Mistakes and accidents on the job.

### CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

- Frequent irritability or moodiness.
- Chronic tiredness and drowsiness.
- Avoidance of co-workers.
- Lying and covering up errors and omissions.
- Overreactions to criticism.
- Poor grooming and hygiene.
- Conflict with co-workers or supervisors.

If a Formal Supervisor Referral is appropriate, MHN's consultant will help you prepare for the meeting with the employee. This may include suggestions on how to present the problem to the employee and your expectations for resolution.



DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE & CONDUCT PROBLEMS

Once you are aware of performance or conduct issues, you need to document them clearly and accurately. Documenting these issues will:

- Help you remember the specific issues.
- Help you identify a pattern of performance or behavior.
- Help you prepare for discussions with the employee, human resources, your management and MHN's Management Consultant.
- Give you a record of actions taken to assist the employee.

Useful documentation needs to be as objective and accurate as possible. These guidelines will help you stay focused on work performance and avoid common supervisory pitfalls:

- Record the specific date, times and place of the behavior.
- Record your actual observations, not hearsay or your opinions or conclusions.
- Focus on performance and conduct, not on personal issues.
- Keep records of good performance as well as poor performance.
- Challenge yourself to be fair, objective, and consistent. (Ask yourself if you'd take the same action if another employee performed this way).
- Document the action as soon after the fact as possible.
- Update records on a regular basis.

Below is an example of documenting specific employee behavior.

Employee's name: Joe P. Smith			
Day	Date	Time	Observations
Monday	6/4/04	8:30 AM	Tardy, 30 minutes
Wednesday	6/6/04	8:45 AM	Tardy, 45 minutes
Thursday	6/7/04	9:00 AM	Absent due to "recurring migraine"
Monday	6/11/04	8:30 AM	Tardy, 30 minutes
Tuesday	6/12/04	9:15 AM	Absent due to "recurring migraine"
Wednesday	6/13/04	9:00 AM	Absent due to doctor's appointment
Friday	6/15/04	2:45 PM	Left early to pick up son from school
Monday	6/18/04	1:15 PM	Late from lunch break, unexplained

## MEETING WITH THE EMPLOYEE

### CONDUCTING THE REFERRAL MEETING WITH THE EMPLOYEE

- Be direct and specific about your concerns.
- Be honest, firm, and respectful.
- Document specific problems.
- Don't rely on your memory.
- Have written documentation, including dates and times of the conduct or performance problems. Give a copy to the employee.
- Do not diagnose the employee's problems.
- Avoid analyzing and labeling.
- Do not try to solve the employee's problems.
- Show confidence and respect in your employee by expecting him or her to take responsibility for managing his or her own problems.
- State clearly your expectation that job performance and/or conduct will improve. Indicate time frames and schedule meetings to measure improvement.

### PRESENTING THE FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL

- Explain that the referral is being made because factors that are not work-related can sometimes contribute to job performance and conduct problems.
- Be sure the employee understands that he or she can choose whether or not to accept the referral.
- Explain that, regardless of whether the referral is accepted, you will continue to evaluate performance and conduct in the workplace.
- Tell the employee he or she will be asked to sign a limited release of information, and describe the information that will be given to you if the release is signed. (See below)
- Ask the employee to indicate whether he or she accepts or refuses the referral.
- Advise your MHN consultant whether the employee has accepted or refused the referral. Provide any new information you obtained during your meeting.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

### CONSENT TO RELEASE INFORMATION

At the first assessment session, the employee will be asked to sign an **"Authorization for Release of Information"** form (sample form later in this booklet). If the employee signs this limited release of information, the MHN consultant is authorized to advise you of the following:

1. **Attendance** – Did the employee attend the sessions(s)?
2. **Plan of Action** – Was a plan developed? (The nature of the problem will not be disclosed)
3. **Employee Agreement** – Did the employee agree to follow through with the plan?

The Formal Supervisor Referral is not intended to replace, or protect an employee from, disciplinary or administrative action. Whether the employee accepts or refuses the referral, you should continue to document all relevant information and monitor work. If work performance or conduct does not improve, appropriate disciplinary or administrative action may be warranted.

Remember, management consultation and the referral process is designed to augment your own supervisory style and the State's disciplinary processes, not replace them.

## USE OF EAP SESSIONS

When an employee visits EAP as part of a Formal Supervisor Referral, the first/initial sessions (typically only one session but could take two) do not count against his or her personal EAP benefit. The sessions under a Formal Supervisor Referral are limited to assessing the problem, developing a plan of action and referring the employee to an appropriate counselor or community services.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

*Our goal is to provide timely, effective service. With prior approval, we send a confidential questionnaire to each supervisor, manager, or Human Resources representative who makes a Formal Supervisor Referral. We review each questionnaire and follow-up where appropriate. Your feedback is important to us.*

## FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL CHECKLIST

A Formal Supervisor Referral is a referral to EAP initiated by a supervisor or manager when work performance or behavior is an issue. Examples include poor quality or quantity of work, unacceptable conduct, absenteeism or tardiness, or interpersonal relationship problems with other employees or the public. The checklist that follows has been designed to help you gather information and prepare for your discussion with the EAP Management Consultant.

### General Information

- Manager/Supervisor's name
- An alternate person to contact
- Work email address
- Name of employee to be referred
- Employee's address, including county

### Statistical Information

- Employee's length of service
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Marital status
- Position/title
- Employee's health insurance, if known

**Description of Problem**

- Performance issues occurring at work
- Quality of work
- Relationships at work or with the public
- Behavior/conduct
- Absenteeism/tardiness-frequency and patterns
- History of problem-how long?

**Progressive Action**

- Progressive/disciplinary action taken or pending which is relevant to current problems

Future status (i.e. what will be the next step in progressive action if the employee does not improve)

Note: The EAP Management Consultant will coordinate an assessment and referral session with a counselor as soon as the employee agrees to participate in the Formal Supervisor Referral.

## SAMPLE FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL LETTER

Note: This letter should be retyped as an original on your departmental letterhead

### STATE OF CALIFORNIA EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISOR REFERRAL LETTER

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_

From: Manager/Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this letter is to formally refer you to Managed Health Network (MHN), the State of California Employee Assistance Program, for assistance in resolving the identified job performance and/or conduct problem(s) described below:

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Participation in this program is voluntary and you may decline to use the service at any time without penalty to you. However, I will continue to monitor your performance. If your performance or conduct problem(s) described above do not improve, I may need to proceed with disciplinary action.

This formal referral to the Employee Assistance Program is confidential and information can be released only with your written consent. MHN will notify your supervisor or manager if you have accessed EAP or of your failure to keep the initial appointment.

You are asked to schedule an appointment within five business days. I will supply you with the specific name of the EAP Management Consultant with whom you will arrange the appointment. Should you need assistance making this appointment, let your supervisor know. Should you decline to use this service or are unable to keep your appointment, please let your supervisor know immediately.

A copy of this referral letter will be forwarded to a confidential file. It will not become a part of your individual personnel file.

A copy will also be forwarded to MHN (fax: 650-988-4855).

☐ Accepted Referral

☐ Declined Referral

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

### CONSENT TO RELEASE CLIENT INFORMATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print client's name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Case Number)

hereby authorize Managed Health Network (MHN) to disclose specific information listed below and obtained in the course of my assessment and/or treatment for **work related problems** (situation, problem or disorder) to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person) (Organization)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person) (Organization)

The disclosure of information authorized herein shall be limited to:

- Whether or not I attend EAP and/or treatment sessions.
- Whether or not the clinician I saw and I came up with a plan to help resolve the problem.
- Whether or not I have agreed to accept and follow recommendations made by the clinician.

The consent is subject to revocation by the undersigned at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance thereon. If not earlier revoked, it shall terminate on completion of my program participation or no later than one year from the date signed below, whichever is earlier.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Client's signature) (Date)

My initials \_\_\_\_\_ indicate that I have received a copy of this Consent to Release Client Information.

#### CAUTION:

This page is for information only. Do not complete this form, since it is a **SAMPLE** of the form.

The (actual) form **should not** be completed by the supervisor or manager. This form should be completed by the counselor/provider.

Original - MHN  
Copy - Clinician  
Copy - Client



## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFINGS

A critical incident is a highly stressful situation that causes unusually strong emotional reactions, either at the time of or after the incident, that has the potential to affect one's normal functions. Some examples of a critical incident include an on-site injury or death of a coworker, threats or acts of violence, bank robberies and bomb threats. MHN is available to assist you and your employees following a traumatic incident. An onsite Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) can help resolve the aftermath of a trauma. Call your MHN Management Consultant liaison to assess how EAP can best assist you.

### OBJECTIVES OF A CISD

- Reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms
- Limit the phobic reaction of returning to work
- Maintain morale
- Help employees explore their reactions and feelings in a supportive manner
- Help alleviate feelings of guilt and responsibility

### TRAUMA RESPONSE PATTERNS

After experiencing a trauma, personal reactions of the victim(s) may vary from individual to individual. However, many responses to the event appear to be universal. Initially, the victim responds with a sense of shock and disbelief, which is maintained for approximately 24 hours. This psychic numbing protects the victim from the full impact of the incident. When this initial period ends, the victim is likely to experience a variety of symptoms, which could include nightmares, intrusive thoughts (where the victim involuntarily re-experiences the event), sleep disturbance and irritability.

### TIME FRAME TO ARRANGE A CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

- Assistance, crisis management and planning can begin immediately once the caller contacts MHN.

### GOALS FOR A CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

- Normalize the experience
- Remind people that talking about the incident is healthy
- Educate employees to access their support networks
- Caution them that traumas like this may stimulate feelings of vulnerability, loss of control and memories of previous traumas

## MORE REASONS TO CALL AN MHN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Today's workplace has many challenges besides just trying to get the day's work accomplished. Economic stresses, layoffs, restructuring, and additional responsibilities add to employee and supervisor stress. Supervisors and managers need to be alert to signs of possible workplace violence, employee unrest, chemical dependency, and other personnel issues. Our Management Consultants are ready to help you work through these issues and get you the assistance and guidance you need.

Just call EAP at **866-EAP-4SOC** (866-327-4762) to speak to a Management Consultant.

## LIMITATIONS

There are limitations to the services available through EAP. Please review them below:

- The initial assessment sessions for employees accessing EAP through the Formal Supervisor Referral process do not count against a member's EAP benefit. However, additional visits beyond this assessment would.
- Management consultations do not include:
  - Fitness-for-duty consultations
  - Drug Testing
  - Worker's Compensation involvement
  - Medical diagnoses
  - Prescriptions for medications
- EAP benefits do not include:
  - Inpatient or Outpatient treatment
  - Prescription Drugs
  - Supervisor referral based on substance abuse if there is not a job performance issue attributed to it
  - Treatment for autism or mental retardation
  - Services beyond the authorized number of EAP sessions
  - Services provided by non-MHN contracted providers
  - Counseling services mandated by a court of law or paid for by Worker's Compensation
  - Formal psychological evaluations
  - Counseling related to Worker's Compensation
  - Formal excuses for leaves of absence or time off work
  - Clinical evaluations for recommendations for child custody or child abuse proceedings

## NOTES

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, text, or other markings on the page.

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**866-EAP-4SOC**

